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ABSTRACT

Demonstrating a critical stance requires readers to stand apart from the text and consider it objectively. It involves a range of tasks including critical evaluation; comparing and contrasting; and understanding the impact of such features as irony, humor, and organization. According to this paper, the selection of appropriate literature is a crucial initial step in developing a critical stance. The paper delineates the following 16 teaching strategies to engage students in responding to literature: questioning the author; students develop own questions; teacher-guided questioning; teacher modeling of strategies; journals; create a strong response; sketch-to-stretch; defining good literature; collaboration; graphic organizers; sustained silent reading; engage students in peer response; alternatives to summarization; read aloud short stories; literature circles; and other ideas for developing a critical stance. (Contains 19 references.) (NKA)

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Developing Reading Comprehension in the Middle School: Focus on Critical Stance

Four-Town Consortium Professional Development
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CS 511 607

Demonstrating a Critical Stance (Reading Framework, n.d.)

Demonstrating a critical stance requires readers to stand apart from the text and consider it objectively. It involves a range of tasks including critical evaluation; comparing and contrasting; and understanding the impact of such features as irony, humor, and organization.

C. Demonstrating A Critical Stance (CMT, 2000)

The reader will elaborate on the text and make judgments about the text's quality and themes.

1. Use information from the text to make a prediction based on what is read;
2. analyze the author's craft including use of literary devices;
3. evaluate explicit and implicit information and themes within a written work;
4. select, synthesize and/or use relevant information within a written work to include in a response to or extension of the work; and
5. demonstrate an awareness of values, customs, ethics and beliefs included in a written work.

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

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If students are to become literate members of our society, we must create situations where the development of literacy can occur. Teachers throughout Connecticut have shared examples of rich, literate environments. The following strategies are taken from those examples and may be incorporated into any literature unit to help students develop the ability to think deeply about literature. These examples use the following stances that students take in responding to literature:

- Describing the text requires the reader to give an Initial reaction to the text and describe its general content and purpose;
- Interpreting the text requires the reader to construct an interpretation and/or explanation of the text and connect the text to personal knowledge; and
- Moving beyond the text requires the reader to reflect on the text and make personal judgments about its quality and meaning.

The selection of appropriate literature is a crucial initial step. It is essential that selections:

- are authentic pieces of literature; complete, unedited and unexpurgated;
- reflect a kaleidoscope of cultures and experiences; • are developmentally appropriate; and
- are rich in literary qualities and have multiple levels of meaning.

Involve students 'in shared and independent reading so that they have a wide variety of literature from which to draw when discussing, interpreting and comparing works.
Use interest and attitude surveys. Get to know your students through surveys, interviews and observations so you can select works that will be of interest to all members of the class. Surveys can be used at the end of a unit or session and can be designed to find out how students react to various literature or activities and how their knowledge has

changed. Pre and post surveys often increase students' awareness of genres and authors, and help to enrich their experiences as they reflect upon their preferences and attitudes toward the text.

The following series of strategies will enable students to construct meaning from their interactions with text.

STRATEGY I: Questioning the Author (Examining Meaning)

Remind the students that what they read is just someone else's ideas written down. Sometimes what authors have in their minds doesn't come through clearly when they write about it. Sometimes, authors do a good job of explaining, but other times they don't do a very good job at all.

Explain to the students that the author may or may not have expressed things in the clearest way for readers to understand. Explain that the author is a human being and is therefore fallible. It might be the author's problem in communicating the ideas, not the students' lack of ability to comprehend. As readers, we have to figure out what the author is trying to explain. We also have to judge the author's success in making ideas clear to us as readers.

The following queries are suggestions for **Questioning the Author** as students read.

1. What suggestions do the students have for the author to make the text clearer to readers?
2. Why did the author present this detail now?
3. What's the author's message here?
4. Why didn't the author tell us ___ here?
5. Why does the author tell us this?
6. Where is the author not being clear?
7. What is the author really telling us?
8. What does the author mean?
9. What background information should the author include?
10. .What did the author leave out?
11. What does the author want us to remember from this information?
12. How did the author use descriptive words in the text?
13. What has the author told us in this paragraph?
14. What is the author telling us about ___?
15. How do these ideas connect with what the author told us earlier?
16. What does the author mean by ___?

STRATEGY II: Students Develop Own Questions

Encourage students to **develop their own questions** about the -text (including print, audio and visual texts such as (videotape, artwork and music). You might share some of

the following questions with students to model some of the questions teachers and students sometimes ask about texts.

- Do I like this work? Why or why not?
- What memories, feelings or ideas are surfacing?
- What characters and situations in the story remind me of people and situations in my own life? How are they similar and how are they different?
- What issues in this story are similar to real-life issues I have thought about or experienced?
- How has the story clarified, changed or challenged my views on any of these issues?
- When I think about this work, what comes first to my mind?
- Is there an image, character or situation that I start to think about?
- What is my initial reaction as I begin to read the text? Was my initial reaction confirmed?
- How much do I agree or disagree with the way the characters think and act and the kinds of beliefs and values they hold? Where do I differ and why?
- Does anyone in this work remind me of anyone I know?
- As I think ahead to tomorrow's reading, what direction might the story take?
- As I read today, were my predictions of yesterday confirmed? What character was my favorite and why?
- Does a character portray a quality I wish to develop? Why? How does the character demonstrate this quality?
- Do any incidents, ideas or actions in this work remind me of my own life or something that has happened to me?
- What kind of person do I think the author is? What makes me think this way?
- How do the characters in this work remind me of characters or events in other books I have read or movies or television shows I have seen? Do I prefer one of these to the others? If so, why?
- How much did I agree or disagree with the characters, the way they behaved or the kinds of values or beliefs they displayed?
- If I were a teacher, would I want to share this work with my students?
- What startling, unusual and effective words, phrases and images did I come across in my reading today? Which ones would I like to use in my own writing?
- What do I feel is the most important word, phrase or passage in this work? Explain why this is important.
- Would I like to read something else by this author? Why or why not?
- What questions do I hope to have answered tomorrow as I read more of the story?
- Did this work leave me with the feeling there is more to be told?
- What do I think might happen?
- Am I like any of the characters in the work?
- Would I change the ending of the story? Why? How?
- What do I think the title means? If I could change the title, how would I change it and why?
- Are there parts of this work that are confusing to me? Which part? Why?
- If the setting were changed to reflect my neighborhood, how would the events of the story have to change and why?

- Do I wish my life or the lives of my friends were more like the lives of the characters in the story?

(Note: It is of great importance that students create their own questions. Inviting students to ask and respond to their own and other questions is important to the development of critical thinking in the exploration of literature.)

STRATEGY III: Teacher Guided Questioning

Questions asking readers to demonstrate a critical stance might include the following:

- Compare this article/story to that one.
- How useful would this be for _____? Why?
- Do you agree with the author's opinion of this event?
- Does the author use _____ (irony, personification, humor) effectively? Explain.
- What could be added to improve the author's argument? Why?
- Is this information needed?
- What other information would you need to find out?

Developing a Critical Stance
Is this story plausible? Why?
In your opinion, is this a good story? Why or why not?
Would you say this is a traditional story or one in which the author is trying something new or unique?
What connections are there between this work and other selections you have read?
Would you like to read something else by this author? Why or why not?

Some useful terms for discussing prose nonfiction include: allusion, anecdote, aphorism, assumption, autobiography, biography, caricature, cliché, coincidence, connotation, contrast, creative nonfiction, denotation, dialect, didactic, essay, euphemism, episode, figure of speech, hyperbole, idiom, image, incident, irony, metaphor, mood, moral, narration, point of view, personal reminiscence, rhetorical question, satire, simile, stereotype, style, symbol, theme, tone. (Chatel, & Gambini, 2002).

Sample Question Guide for Reading Poetry

Developing a Critical Stance
In your opinion, is this a good poem? Why or why not?

Is this poem effective? What makes it work? Is this poem unique? Why?
If you were writing this poem, what would you change? Keep? How would you predict others might respond to the poem?
Does this poem call to mind any other literary work? What work? Why?

Some useful terms for discussing poetry include: accent, alliteration, allusion, assonance, ballad, blank verse, connotation, consonance, couplet, denotation, diction, dissonance, elegy, epic, figure of speech, foot, free verse, haiku, image, imagery, irony, limerick, line breaks, lyric, metaphor, meter, monologue, mood, narrative poem, ode, onomatopoeia, paraphrase, personification, quatrain, refrain, rhyme, rhythm, scene, sestet, speaker, stanza, stress, simile, symbol, theme, triplet, verse. (Chatel, & Gambini, 2002).

Sample Question Guide for Reading Plays

Developing a Critical Stance
Why did you or did you not enjoy the play?
What is your general impression?
Is the play plausible (plot, character, setting)?
What would you say were the outstanding parts? Weak parts?
Is the play tightly scripted or is there a lot of room for interpretation by a director and actor?
Would you say this is a traditional play or is there anything about it you would call experimental?
If you could change anything about the play, what would you change?

Some useful terms for discussing plays include: action, antagonist, apron, arena, aside, atmosphere, blackout, blocking, business, caricature, character, characterization, climax, collective, complication, comedy, conflict, denouement, dialect, dialogue, downstage, dynamic character, director, episode, exit, exposition, falling action, farce, mime, mood, naturalism, offstage, plot, producer, prologue, props, proscenium, protagonist, rising action, resolution, scene, setting, soliloquy, stage directions, stage left, stage right, staging, static character, stereotype, theme, tragedy, unity, upstage, wings. (Chatel, & Gambini, 2002).

Sample Question Guide for Viewing, Listening, and Responding to Television, Radio, Film, and Video Texts

Developing a Critical Stance
What are the assumptions behind the presentation?

What are the biases? What values are implicit in the presentation?
Why was this medium chosen for this topic?
Is this presentation accurate? Realistic? Artistic?
Do you think that this presentation is successful? Why or why not?
What adaptations to other mediums could be made?
What are the advantages and limitations of this particular medium?
Does this presentation remind you of other literary work?

Media texts can be studied in conjunction with and as complements to other language arts texts. Some useful terms for discussing television, radio, film, and video include: audio, background (BG), credits/titles, beat, board, bring effect under, bring up, canned, close up (CU), closed circuit, control room, cross-fade, cue, cue card, cushion, cut, dead, dissolve, extreme close up (ECU), fade, fade down (FD), fade in (FI), fade out (FO), fade up (FU), focus, foreground, frame, from the top, gain, level lap, live, logo, long shot (LS), medium close up (MCU), montage, off, off scene, off the set (OS), on scene, pan pix, pre-record, scene, set design, simulcast, sequence, synopsis, sound track, split scene, teaser, traveling shot, video, voice over (VO), voice off (V.O.), wide shot (WS), zoom. (Chatel, & Gambini, 2002).

STRATEGY IV: Teacher Modeling of Strategies

Model the processes (Think-Aloud) you expect of your students. Periodically read a work for the first time in the presence of your students. Read the work aloud and think aloud as you are reading. Tell the students where you are confused, where you reread a section, where you read quickly to bypass a description to get to an understanding, where you pause to savor the author's language. As you read, tell the students the thoughts that pass through your mind. Eventually, have students engage in the process of thinking aloud.

Poor readers often do not

- draw on background knowledge as they read;
- make predictions as they read;
- visualize the events of a text as they read;
- recognize confusion as they read;
- recognize a text's structure /organization as they read;
- identify/recognize a purpose for reading;
- monitor their strategy use according to the purpose for reading the text;.

In other words, students do not necessarily think while they are reading.

Modeling

By modeling for students the types of behaviors good readers are engaged in as they read, we are providing them with the opportunity to become aware of the many strategies and monitoring behaviors that good readers use.

When good readers are reading relatively simple texts (according to their own reading abilities) these strategic behaviors are fairly automatic. Typically, good readers only become aware of their strategy use when they recognize that they are failing to comprehend. They then are cognizant of the need to reevaluate their strategy use in order to remedy their failure to comprehend. Furthermore, good readers are more likely to fall back on appropriate strategies when the need to change strategies becomes apparent. For most poor readers however, using a variety of strategies, using strategies appropriately, and monitoring strategies is not automatic. Therefore modeling strategic behaviors for struggling readers by thinking aloud for them while we read (and hence, allowing students to think along), is the first step in raising their awareness of what it means to be a strategic reader.

Addtionally, take on the same assignments that you give to your students. For example, if you ask students to write an initial reaction to a piece of literature, write your own initial reaction. Let them see that you, too, pause to think or search for a comparison to another work. Share your response with those of the students. You might write on the overhead or chalkboard so students can see your responses.

STRATEGY V: Journals

Use the following journals as often as possible to facilitate students' thinking about literature.

- **Dialectic/ Double-Entry Journal Adapted by R. Chatel (2002)**
  http://www.sjc.edu/rchatel

Ann Berthoff conceived the "Double-Entry Journal" as a during-reading strategy for students to identify important information from expository and narrative text , share these ideas with others, and develop their own opinions about what they have read.

The dialectic journal is not a diary; it is rather an important means by which students develop a better understanding of the texts they read in class. It is the place where they incorporate the ideas discussed in class, personal ideas about literature and the specific texts under study, and their personal relationship with those texts. It is an invaluable when students must prepare for examinations, papers, informal class discussions, and seminars.

Dialectic means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." This is what students must do in their journals—dialogue with themselves and as an extension of the process, with their peers. In the journal, students are required to have a conversation with the text and with themselves **while they read**.

The strategy involves several stages:

A. The Double--entry/dialectical Notebook

During Reading - As they read, students should take notes on the reading in their own words on the right hand page of a spiral notebook. They can include reading notes, quotations, references, lists, examples and so forth. An 8 1/2 x 11 inch size spiral

notebook seems to work very well. They should note page numbers in the left margin and quote accurately when they use the author's own words. This process encourages them to figure out what is important in what they read and perhaps more importantly encourages them to reinforce that reading by writing it down in their own words with appropriate referencing.

On the facing left hand side page of the notebook, students should write down their responses to what they are reading. These responses can include notes about the notes, summaries, questions, disagreements, ideas they like, analogies to other readings and ideas, concepts they don't know, vocabulary to look up. Berthoff notes that her students see their own text "coming into being." She furthermore suggests that an interpretive process is occurring on this page which encourages students to ask questions which go beyond understanding content to asking critical questions. She writes that such a process can teach "that how we construe is how we construct." I encourage my students to write in another color pen on this left hand page and occasionally to write in that other color on the right hand side, responding directly to the author's text. Plenty of room should be left for additions and responses from other readers.

B. Exchanging Notebooks

1. Students can work with an assigned numbered segment of the text, with the entire text, with a discrete unit of the text. When they have finished they can exchange their notebook with the student next to them. Each student should respond to the others notes on the left hand page. Ideally this person entering the dialogue should use yet another color pen so that their remarks stand out. Again students should be encouraged to write generatively in responding and they should be encouraged to suspend judgment. After this exercise, students should return the notebook to the original author, read the comments and respond yet again to their partner, clarifying, elaborating, rethinking. The entire process should be repeated on a new segment of text and notebooks should be exchanged yet again with another partner.

2. Alternatively, students can pass their notebooks to the person on their right, following the process outlined above (II.1). When responses-are completed notebooks are returned to the original owner who responds. When the process is completed, students pass notebooks in the opposite direction to their left and again receive feedback, this time from a different person. Although more complicated, this is the preferred technique: (1) it enables students to read more notebooks and see a broader range of responses; it avoids the repetition of the second reader repeating by way of response what the first reader is reading in the original set of notes.

C. Adaptations for the Computer

1. Writing dialectical notebooks on the computer facilitates response since readers can easily interject comments and space is not a problem. Notes can be taken in regular script with student responses typed in capitals so that they can easily be seen. When students trade computers or move to the left, the new reader can add

their comments in bold face type. Final responses from the original reader/writer again can be typed in capitals for clarity.

2. Finished notebooks can be printed out in duplicate and read aloud as a dialogue to the larger group. This provides a way to model the process to collaboratively exploring responses and thoughts as a group.

D. Typical Problems

1. Characteristically students are cursory in their responses to the text. They may write down a single sentence in response to a page of notes or their note-taking itself may be too sketchy. Often they will merely agree or disagree. The point is to encourage students to freewrite--freely and generatively in response to the text. They need to go beyond to the text, to make connections with other readings, with other things that they know. A solution to this is to have students exchange notebooks with a variety of students in the class (including the teacher or leader) so that they can get a sense of possibility; in seeing what others do with their notebooks it gives them a sense of what they too could/should be doing. For this reason, I encourage students to exchange notebooks in both directions.

2. Often when student's exchange notebooks, the second reader tends to 'play teacher,' either agreeing or disagreeing with the first student's comments. Alternatively the second reader gives minimal responses. By understanding the principles of listener-oriented response levels--pointing, and say back--the second reader can respond in ways that encourage the first reader to clarify her response, to elaborate, to in turn respond to the second reader's comment. The idea here is not to seek approval or judgment from the second reader, but to use the second reader as a catalyst for further development of ideas and for refinement of thought.

Because expository text often contains a great deal of new information, it can be particularly challenging for students to decide what's important enough to remember. The Dialectic or Double-Entry Journal strategy offers students support as they learn to make these decisions.

Sample Dialectical Journal Evaluation Rubric
http://home.att.net/~ka.mueller/diajournal.htm

A	☐ Detailed, meaningful passages, plot and quote selections ☐ Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; Avoids clichés. ☐ Includes comments about literary elements such as diction, imagery, syntax, and how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text. ☐ Makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking, insightful questions ☐ Coverage of text is complete and thorough ☐ Journal is neat, organized and professional looking; student has followed directions in the organization of journal
B	☐ Less detailed, but good plot and quote selections ☐ Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connections ☐ Includes some literary elements, but less on how they contribute to the meaning ☐ Some personal connection; asks pertinent questions ☐ Adequately addresses all parts of reading assignment ☐ Journal is neat and readable; student has followed directions in the organization of journal
C	☐ Few good details from the text ☐ Most of the commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary/paraphrase ☐ Some listing of literary elements; virtually no discussion on meaning ☐ Limited personal connection; asks few, or obvious questions ☐ Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not very long or thorough ☐ Journal is relatively neat, but may be difficult to read. Student has not followed all directions in journal organization: loose-leaf, no columns, not in separate notebook, etc.
D or F	☐ Hardly any good details from the text ☐ All notes are plot summary or paraphrase ☐ Few literary elements, virtually no discussion on meaning ☐ Limited personal connections, no good questions ☐ Limited coverage of the text: way too short ☐ Did not follow directions in organizing journal; difficult to read or follow

- **Metacognitive Journal**: Using a double-entry journal format, the reader notes on the left side what was learned and on the right how it was learned.

- **Learning Log**: Using a double-entry journal format, the student takes traditional notes on the left side and on the right records now connections, applications or evaluations. This assists the reader in regularly rereading content.

Sample prompts for students' learning log entries

Process Entries	Reaction Entries
What did I understand about the work we did in class today?	If I were the teacher, what questions would I ask about this assignment/chapter, etc.?
What didn't I understand? What was confusing? What problems did I have with a text assignment?	Explain a theory, concept, vocabulary term, etc., to another person.
How did I solve a problem with understanding, vocabulary, text, etc.?	Free-writing: simply write for 5-10 minutes about a specific topic, whatever comes into the writer's mind.
At what point did I get confused? What did I like or dislike today?	Summarize, analyze, synthesize, compare and contrast, evaluate an idea, topic, event, person, etc.
What questions do I have about what we did today?	Connection with prior knowledge or experience. "Unsent letters" to people, living or dead, historical or mythical, about topic of study.
Notes, lists, or jottings relevant to my upcoming assignments.	Doodles; words and pictures that reflect feelings or thoughts on a topic.
My reflections on cooperative learning group processes-what did or didn't work and why, my role, the role of other participants.	Response to higher-order questions posed by the teacher.
My predictions and expectations about a new topic.	Reread a log entry from last week. Write a reaction to what was written.

- **Problem-Solution Journal**: Using a double-entry journal format, the student notes a iproblem in the right-hand column and on the left brainstorms alternatives for solutions, anticipates stumbling blocks and proposes arguments for a proposed solution.

- **Reflective Journal**: Divide each paper into three columns and entitle them "What Happened," "How I Felt" and "What I Learned." This encourages students to make connections to personal life and the human condition.

- **Synthesis Journal**: Divide each paper into three columns and entitle them "What I Did," "What I Learned" and "How I Can Use It." This encourages students to review past experiences and plan for future applications. In addition, it reinforces the concepts learned.

- **Effects Journal**: Using a double-entry journal format, entitle the left side "What Happened," and the right side "What Might/Should Happen as a Result of This." This encourages students to anticipate changes that might occur based on the events experienced.

Additional journal activities include the following:

- connecting experiences to reading;
- answering specific questions;
- writing questions about puzzling passages;
- noting repetition, contradiction and oppositions in reading;
- predicting outcomes;
- writing new endings or additional lines to stories;
- voicing opinions about characters and action;
- giving and defining points of view;
- copying and responding to passages;
- retelling events;
- imitating sentences;
- paraphrasing difficult sentences and passages;
- identifying values of characters;
- commenting on structure, setting, plot and theme;
- speculating about characters' motives;
- relating a particular work to others;
- summarizing class discussions;
- reflecting upon learning;
- shadowing a character through a story; and
- drawing a picture of something described in a story.

STRATEGY VI: Create a Strong Response

Help students create a strong response to questions about literature that require interpretation and reflection. Have students work individually, in pairs and in both small and large groups to create responses. A word processor often facilitates the work, as C students can see the response take shape on the screen.

Have students select their best responses to share - orally, on an overhead or through duplicated copies. Have the students explain why they selected these responses as their best, what thinking processes led them to create the responses and what they might now add or change. Invite classmates to share where they agree or disagree and where they might have added to or clarified an idea.

For example, have students score their own responses and those of fellow classmates according to class-created and CAPT rubrics. Collect student responses to a particular work of literature. Remove all names. Photocopy 10 to 12 of the responses. Collate the copies and create individual packets for students to read. As the students read, have them list one strong or weak quality of a response. When the students have

completed this task, the teacher facilitates a discussion in which the responses are listed according to their respective qualities.

On a chart, all of the qualities the students have identified are combined and synthesized. Have the students turn negative qualities into positive ones. For example, if a student has written "No reasons or examples," the student turns that comment into a positive statement, "Uses examples and gives reasons. "Use the students' own language in compiling your class list of "Good Qualities of Responses." Create a class rubric for reader response.

After the class rubric is created, introduce the CAPT rubric by distributing copies and by creating a class chart that distinguishes among the 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 and I responses. Invite students to compare the way their class-created rubric does and does not fit the CAPT rubric. Show students where their rubric is similar to the CAPT rubric. Show them where the language of their original list (for example, "doesn't have a clue,") means the same as the more formal language used on the CAPT rubric,(for example, "displays limited understanding of the text").

STRATEGY VII: Sketch-to-Stretch

Sketch-to-stretch (Tompkins, 1998).is a visually representing activity that moves students beyond literal comprehen- sion to think more deeply about the characters, theme, and other elements of story structure and the author's craft in a story they are reading (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988). Students work in small groups to draw pictures or diagrams to represent what the story means to them, not pictures of their favorite character or episode. In their sketches, students use lines, shapes, colors, symbols, and words to express their interpretations and feelings. Since students work in a social setting with the support of classmates, they share ideas with each other, extend their understanding, and generate new insights (Whitin, 1994,1996).

The steps in sketch-to-stretch are:

1. Read and respond to a story. Students read a story or several chapters of a longer book, and they respond to the story in a grand conversation or in reading logs.
2. Talk about the themes in the story and ways to symbolize meanings. Teachers remind students that there are many ways to represent the meaning of an experience, and that students can use lines, colors, shapes, symbols, and words to visually represent what a story means to them. Students and the teacher talk about possible meanings and ways they might visually represent these meanings.
3. Have students draw sketches. Students work in small groups to draw sketches that reflect what the story means to them. Emphasize that students should focus on the meaning of the story, not their favorite part, and that there is no single correct interpretation of the story.
4. Have students share their sketches with classmates. Students meet in small groups to share their sketches and talk about the

symbols they used. Encourage classmates to study each student's sketch and tell what they think the student is trying to convey.

5. Have some students share with the class. Each group chooses one sketch from their group to share with the class.
6. Revise sketches and make final copies. Some students will want to revise and add to their sketches based on feedback they received and ideas from classmates. Also, students make final copies if the sketches are being used as projects.

APPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Students need many opportunities to experiment with this activity before they move beyond drawing pictures of the story events or characters and are able to think symbolically. It is helpful to introduce this teaching strategy through a minilesson and draw several sketches together as a class before students do their own sketches. By drawing several sketches, students learn that there is no single correct interpretation, and teachers help students focus on the interpretation rather than on their artistic talents (Ernst, 1993 as cited in Tompkins, 1998).

(Workshop Application with poem "Wondering")

wondering

Sometimes when I have nothing to do,
I wonder how spiders do what they do.
When they go climbing up the wall
I wonder why they do not fall.
When crossing a ceiling up side down
They never tumble to the ground.
I can't figure out where spiders hide
That thread they use when they need a ride.
When spiders stay a while in a place,
How do they leave that gift of lace?
How come a spider so little and gray
Can frighten and scare big people away?
Sometimes when spiders have nothing to do,
I wonder if they wonder about me, too.

STRATEGY VIII: Defining Good Literature

Involve students in discussing what makes good literature. Each text might lead students to consider a different quality. While there may be many qualities that constitute good literature, it is important that each student "invents" those qualities and incorporates the qualities offered by classmates, teachers and scholars. This type of activity will enable students develop a critical stance about what they read.

STRATEGY IX: Collaboration

Have students collaborate to answer questions. Put the four CAPT questions on the board. Have students work as a group to answer each question. Before asking, "What is good literature?" answer the question, "What is literature?" As a collaborative group, have students come up with a definition. First, they develop criteria for defining good literature. Then students identify an example of good literature according to the criteria they have created. Students often will use for discussion and debate the books they are reading. If students have been involved in reading a wide variety of rich literature, the debates will be rich and instructive. Discussions will include universal themes and qualities of literature that are common to multiple texts.

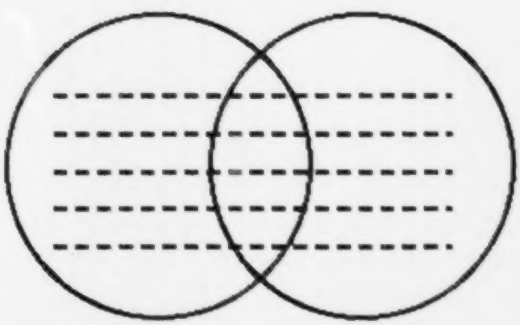
A variation involves assigning a particular work to groups of students. Ask each group to
find quotes that are significant to the text, select their favorite, and then write a group answer about the significance of the quote. The groups then present the quote to others. Ask them to respond to the quote and compare the responses.

STRATEGY X: Graphic Organizers

Encourage students to use graphic organizers to make their thinking visible. Graphic organizers promote synthesizing, comparing and contrasting, evaluating information, and selecting and using relevant information. Students should be free to select from and use a variety of graphic organizers. Students should be given frequent opportunities to create their own graphic organizers.

Compare and Contrast

Venn Diagram



Comparing and Contrasting Use to analyze similarities and differences between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.), by placing individual characteristics in either the left or right sections, and common characteristics within the overlapping section.

T-Chart

Looks Like	Sounds Like
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

Comparing and Contrasting Use to analyze similarities and differences

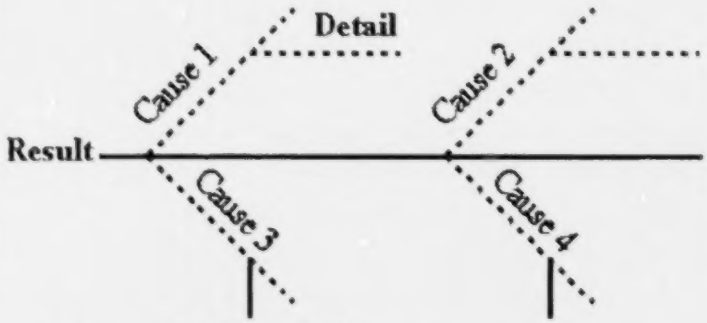
between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.), by placing individual characteristics in either the left or right sections.

Compare/Contrast Matrix

	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		
Attribute 1		

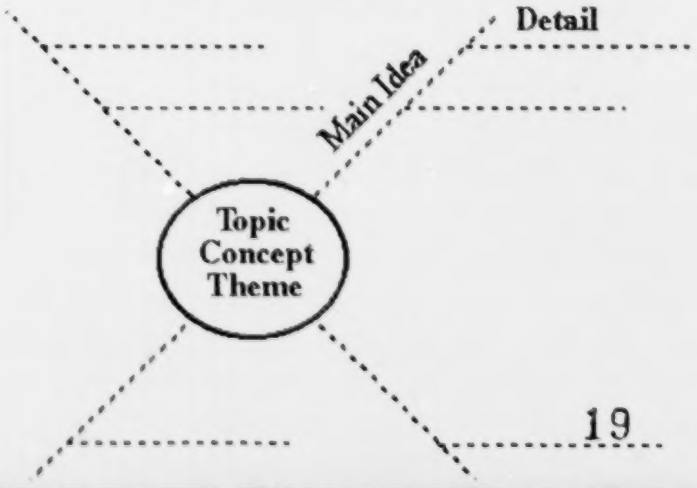
Comparing and Contrasting Use to show similarities and differences between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.). Key frame question: What things are being compared? How are they similar? How are they different? (NCREL, 1988)

Fishbone Map



Analyzing Used to show the interaction of a complex event (an election, a nuclear explosion) or complex phenomenon (juvenile delinquency, learning disabilities). Key frame questions: What are the factors that cause X? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist? (NCREL, 1988)

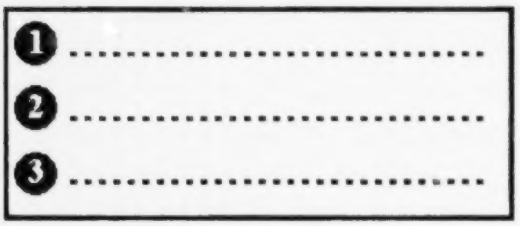
Spider Map



Analyzing Used to describe a central idea: a thing (a geographic region), process (meiosis), concept (altruism), or proposition with support (experimental drugs should be available to AIDS victims). Key frame questions: What is the

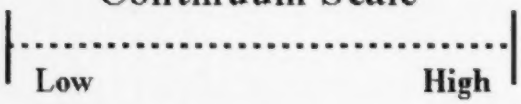
central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions? (NCREL, 1988)

Ranking



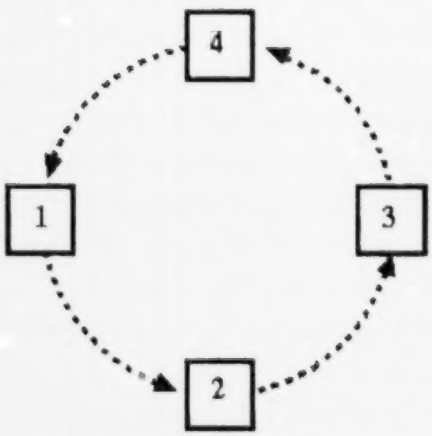
Sequencing Use when prioritizing elements from most important to least important; relative position or standing; a series of things or persons; or an orderly arrangement from 1st to last. See: Continuum Scale, Cycle, Bridging Snapshots, & Series of Events Chain. Use to list, compare, analyze, and synthesize information about subjects, concepts, topics.

Continuum Scale



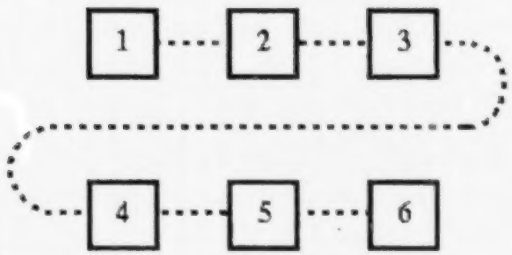
Sequencing Use for time lines showing historical events or ages (grade levels in school), degrees of something (weight), shades of meaning (Likert scales), or ratings scales (achievement in school). Key frame questions: What is being scaled? What are the end points? (Pathways, 1997

Cycle



Sequencing Use to show how a series of events interact to produce a set of results again and again (weather phenomena, cycles of achievement and failure, the life cycle). Key frame questions: What are the critical events in the cycle? How are they related? In what ways are they self-reinforcing? (NCREL, 1988)

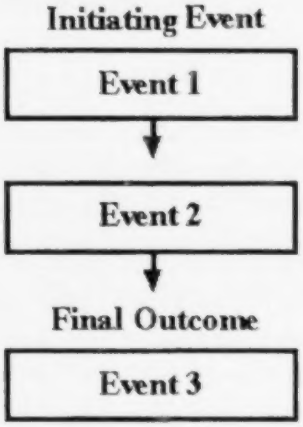
Bridging Snapshots



Sequencing Use to describe the stages of something (the life cycle of a primate); the steps a linear procedure (how to neutralize an acid); a sequence of events (how feudalism led to the formation of nation states); or the goals, actions, and outcomes of a historical figure or character a novel (the rise an fall of Napoleon). Key frame questions: What is the object, procedure, or initiating event? What are the stages or steps? How do they lead to one another? What is the final outcome? (NCREL, 1988)

Sequencing Use to see changes over time, reveal the sequence of step-by-step methods, illustrate complex processes, and show cause and effect.

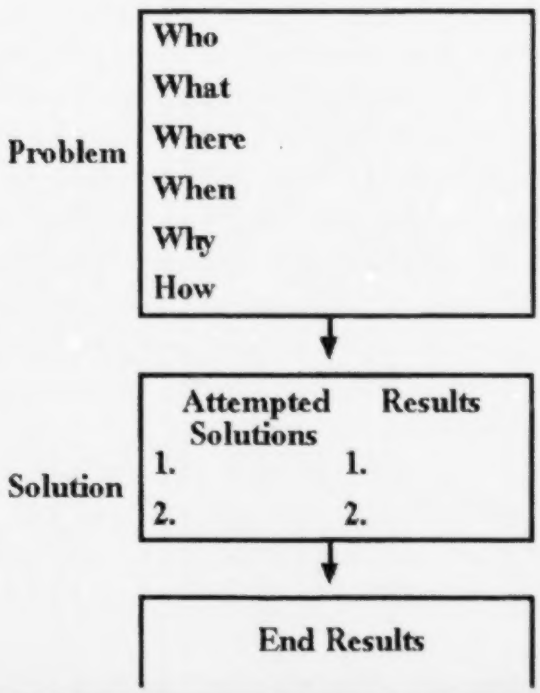
Series of Events Chain



in

in

Problem/Solution Outline



Sequencing Use to show the problem solving process by defining the components of the problem and attempted solutions. Basis elements of the problem may vary, but the process remains constant.

STRATEGY XI: Sustained Silent Reading

Involve students in sustained silent reading. It is most important for students to be 'ven time to read independently during the school day. Reading periodically should be preceded by, and sometimes interrupted by, journal writing, peer and teacher conferences, and mini lessons or class discussions.

STRATEGY XII: Engage Students in Peer Response

An effective strategy to use with students as a response to literature activity is peer response. This strategy presents students with an opportunity to collaborate in a small-group setting or with a partner. Students who may be reluctant to share information in a larger setting may feel much more comfortable in this type of activity and, as a result, gain insight into how another student responds to a shared piece of literature. Students respond to a selection either in groups or as partners. Once students have completed a shared reading, they write a response to the literature using a question from the CAPT reading framework. Students then pass their responses to other students, who carefully read and write replies. The responses can be in question form or can be constructive, positive criticisms to the original responses. These are returned to the original students who then must write reactions to the questions or comments of their peers. This strategy allows students to listen to the interpretations of others as they construct their own meaning.

STRATEGY XIII: Alternatives to Summarization

Instructional activities can elicit or extend an initial response when students interpret literature. Having students review, summarize or retell a story often can discourage reading rather than support it. If students perceive the purpose of reading a novel to be one of these exercises, there is little room for the joy and satisfaction of reading just for the sake of becoming involved in another world. A response to a text must include sustained contact with the book, ownership of the process of making meaning from the text, and sharing the experience and reactions to literature. Teachers need to keep these three elements in mind and encourage readers to make an initial response of their own choice. Not all readers will choose an initial formal response because the experience can be too confusing to share.

Teachers might consider the following options for their students:

- Create a **cartoon strip** with captions to convey the main idea of a chapter or incident in the story. The strip should be at least 8 to 12 frames in length. This calls on the creative and interpretive skills of the reader in isolating an incident and maintaining continuity with a limited medium.
- **Write a short play** from a story selection to be enacted by a small group. The effort put into the writing must be made worthwhile through an opportunity for a final production before an audience.
- **Poetry** writing is another option. Models will give students the confidence and information necessary for success with this type of structure.
- Students can keep a **character diary** where they record connections, comments or questions they have as they read. The character diary is written as if the student is a character in the story. This helps a reader to see the point of view of one character in the book. It also helps students to understand the character's relationships with other people in the book and the time and sequence in the book. If the novel is episodic and the story jumps from one setting to another, a diary of one of the characters helps to maintain the flow of the story. Illustrations of the characters or an interesting section of the plot all require a student to recall, select and decide what will be depicted.
- Students can **write a response** to enhance their understanding of text. Such writing should not be seen as an imposed task, but as an extension of the pleasure of reading. Students might extend the story, change an ending, make the antagonist win, write a newspaper report, compare the story or character with another, change the setting of the story or relate the story to personal experiences. The options become more accessible after each has been tried. The teacher needs to serve as an active participant.
- Students can **customize text** by developing a project of personal interest. This often can be a spontaneous development in which students can create such projects as wall charts that develop one aspect of a selection. They might choose to interview someone they know who can share information on the topic or an aspect of the text.

STRATEGY XIV: Read Short Stories Aloud

Read short stories aloud. Reading surveys reveal that students like being read to in class. Students are enthralled by a good "read-aloud." More importantly, "read-alouds" lead many students to read the books, look for other works by the same author and go beyond listening to a more active and personal involvement with the texts. Hearing good literature brings the text to life, fills the classroom with the author's words and provides students with one more avenue for loving books. "Read-alouds" provide excellent opportunities for engagement with text. During the "read-alouds" teachers should encourage students to raise personal questions, make predictions and offer thoughts on quality.

Reading aloud takes practice. Both teachers and students need opportunities to learn. The following tips should help with "read-alouds."

- Read the selection at least once to yourself before presenting. Decide how you will read it. You might divide a work that is too long to read in the amount of time you have. Separate the reading by stopping at strategically planned places in the story.
- Read to the students, not at them. Make eye contact as often as possible.
- Keep your reading rate slower than conversation. Avoid a tendency to speed up.
- Pause frequently, before and after parts you want to stress, to facilitate understanding.
- Change your voice for the story's characters.
- Change your voice for the story's different words.
- Change volume as appropriate.
- Use facial expressions.
- Encourage listeners to make predictions, connections and evaluations about the text.
- Select stories that you yourself enjoy.
- Be enthusiastic.

STRATEGY VI Literature Circles

In Literature Circles, (Harvey Daniels, Literature Circles) small groups of students read the same book. After reading a chapter or two, each student completes a different task. After completing the tasks, the group gets together and discusses what was read and shares what they did.

Some of these tasks that students are responsible for are:

- The Discussion Director develops a list of four or five questions that the group might want to discuss about this part of the book. The questions should be about major details of the reading. The purpose of the task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions.
- The Literary Luminary locates a few special sections of the text that the group would like to hear read aloud. The idea is to help people remember passages of the text that may be significant, interesting, confusing or well written. List the page number and the paragraph number of the text that will be read. Also, write a sentence or two stating why the paragraph was chosen.
- The Illustrator draws some kind of picture related to the reading. This task should take time and the illustrator should take care to produce a quality picture. As the drawing is presented, other members of the group comment.
- The Connector finds connections between the book the group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to one's life, to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other places, to other people or problems.
- The Vocabulary Enricher finds five to eight especially important words in the day's reading. List the page number and paragraph, the word and the definition.
- The Summarizer prepares a brief summary of the day's reading which should include the key points, the main highlights, the essence of the selection.

Role of the Teacher - Facilitator of the Group

Teachers should:

- collect sets of good books;
- help groups to form;
- visit and observe group meetings;
- confer with students or groups who struggle;
- orchestrate sharing sessions;
- keep records; and
- make assessment notes.

Strategy XVI: Other Ideas for Developing a Critical Stance

1. Construct a different side to the text's position, even if this construction involves some imagination on your part and is not really in keeping with your beliefs. Try writing this conflicting view in a single draft called "The Other Side."
2. Ask yourself what the contribution of the text is to a body of knowledge, the text's contribution to general knowledge. Locate the text within a larger framework. How does this text differ or appear to be the same as previous texts?
3. Read the text for tone. What does the text additionally communicate via subtle (or not so subtle) cues?
4. Read the text for structural decisions and overall intent. Ask yourself: Is this text, as a whole, reflecting, reporting, explaining, persuading? Is it composed of a series of structural decisions-in other words, does it report, then explain, and finally persuade?

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